

Is the Intellect the Devil?

Part 3 of 4

Franklin Merrell-Wolff

July 16, 1980

This is the third tape in the Convention series. So far we, in the preceding tapes, challenged the identification of the intellect with the devil—the devil symbolizing the negative principles of darkness and evil—but, in turn, we showed reason for regarding the intellect as identical with Lucifer, which means the bringer of light, although there has been an identification in the past of Lucifer with the principle of evil, though I think quite erroneously.

Now, the picture as developed so far implies that at this stage of evolution instead of an emergence from the subjective to the objective of qualities, there was a principle of superimposition of the principle of the higher mind. This would appear to be a different form in the development from that which applied in the progress of the Monad through all kingdoms of nature up to and including the proto-human stage, which stage lasted through three and a half Rounds and up to the last portion of the Third Root-Race and perhaps even the earliest portion of the Fourth. And then suddenly there was the superimposition of the principle of mind, in the higher sense. This brings up several questions. There was, it is said, a “fall” on the part of the *Manasaputra*, whom, we are given to understand, are entities on a stage of evolution transcending that of the proto-human, that through an error they fell, and this principle was then interjected into the evolving humanity upon this man-bearing Globe. A question arises, does the development through this stage with any humanity wait upon the fall of higher beings? This seems very improbable. There is no certainty that there will be a failure and such a fall, it being predicated that the action of these beings is free, and therefore a failure was involved for which there was responsibility. A suggestion that I would make is that in the light that this fall happened, it was used, we might say, opportunistically to facilitate the evolution of the particular humanity connected with this man-bearing planet, and that it is not a general process in nature as a whole. I could see the possibility that in connection with some humanity where there was no fall of higher beings involved that there could be a voluntary descent for the purpose of effecting the growth and emergence of a humanity, that there could be, as it were, a mental overshadowing that would arouse the mental principle that is latent in the Monads of such an evolving humanity. These are speculative thoughts, but they were aroused in my mind by the fact that a fall of higher beings played a role in the evolution of this particular humanity. It looks as though here a move was made by nature that was what we might call opportunistic rather than a defining of a universal pattern. At any rate, that is the story as it is given in the best source of information in this field of which I have any knowledge.

A quotation from *The Mahatma Letters*, second edition, eighth impression, p. 87, is pertinent here:

Now there are—there *must be* “failures” in the ethereal races of the many classes of Dhyan Chohans or Devas as well as among men. But still as these failures are too far progressed and spiritualized to be thrown back forcibly from their Dhyan Chohanship into the vortex of a new primordial evolution through the lower kingdoms, this then happens. When a new solar system is to be evolved these Dhyan Chohans are borne in by the influx “ahead” of the elementals and remain as a latent or inactive spiritual force in the aura of the nascent world of a new system until the stage of human evolution is reached. Then Karma has reached them and they will have to accept to the last drop in the bitter cup of retribution. Then they become an *active* Force, and commingle with the Elementals, or progressed *entities* of the pure animal kingdom to develop little by little the full type of humanity. In this commingling they lose their high intelligence and spirituality of Devaship to regain them in the end of the seventh ring in the seventh round.¹

All that has been said so far upon this subject in this tape implies that there is in the proto-humanity something like a double entityhood when that proto-humanity becomes more or less intellectual humanity. Since there are variations in the degrees of fusion of the two, the intellectual and the proto-human, there would be different relationships manifested, different attitudes manifested. Those in whom the intellectual principle was minimal might find themselves much more strongly identified with the proto-human than with the intellectual human; and on the other hand, where the degree of the fusion on the part of the Dhyan Chohan with the proto-human was largest, the identification of oneself would tend to be with the intellectual side, the intellectual human as opposed to the proto-human. And it can lead to this double kind of consequence: a thinking of oneself and making of one’s own identification with the proto-human, in one case, who possesses an intellectual capacity, but with which he does not identify himself. He identifies himself with the other aspects of the nature and may find the intellectual as something of an annoyance, something he would want to get away from. And as I look across this world, I would say that most human beings are of that type. On the other hand, at the other extreme, one may identify himself with this higher mental principle and feel a negative attitude towards the merely proto-human element in himself, which includes all of the animalistic qualities. So you could think of yourself as a proto-human being irritated and driven by a higher principle, or you could think of yourself as the higher principle which has to endure association with the animalism of the proto-human. This would lead to two very different conclusions. In the latter case, one would feel the association as essentially punishing.

Sometime ago in my analysis of the intellectual function, I isolated two contrasting uses of the intellect; one I called the development of a *pointer* conception. The other I called the development of a *container* conception. I can illustrate the idea of a pointer conception in a very simple way. Suppose one is traveling towards some destination, say, for example, the city of Los Angeles, and he comes to a sign with the

¹ A. T. Barker, ed., *The Mahatma Letters* (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1923), 87.

word 'Los Angeles' and an arrow pointing in a given direction. This sign and arrow are pointer conceptions. One would not find the value of the experience of the city of Los Angeles by analyzing this conception, by penetrating into its deeper meaning. He would rather, in using it correctly, use it as a suggestion as to a direction to be traveled in order to experience the reality of the city of Los Angeles. The sign is extraneous to the meaning; it's not contained in the sign. One reaches to a different way of cognition. He does not penetrate into the pointer concept.

Now, as I listen to the uses of the concept in certain discourses and particularly in the case of the Zen Buddhist use of the mind, I find this use in the pointer sense the pattern. What one deals with here is not a system of ideation, a development in conceptual terms, but a movement toward a process that is non-conceptual. The concept points beyond the concept to a non-conceptual process—a process which seems to be non-ideational, but rather a sort of process in immediate experience itself. This also one finds in art criticism, such as the criticism of music or of the plastic arts, for example. One does not get the value of the critical evaluation by penetrating into the meaning of the concept, but by reproducing in his consciousness the empiric realizations or experiences of the artistic subject matter. One who did not know music or plastic art would not gain any value from the criticism, as he could not follow it. Here there are psychical processes that are non-ideational, rather in the terms of images than of ideas.

This is a familiar use of the intellect, and I believe we must understand the Zen Buddhist use of the intellect in this same way; but it is not the way the intellect is employed in philosophy, science, and mathematics, in general, and particularly so in the field of mathematics. Here, in the field of mathematics, we take the conceptual complex and penetrate into that conceptual complex to evoke the meaningful development out of that complex. The general pattern here is a system of basic postulates and definitions. These then are in the form of ideation analyzed and synthesized into combinations that are given in the form of theorems capable of conceptual proof, and thus a mathematical system is developed. We penetrate into the meaning of the concept and bring into explicit formulation that meaning in growing degree, and thus a systematic mathematical discipline is developed.

These are two very different uses of the concept, and I think it's important for us to bear this distinction in mind in our evaluation of the various developments which come before us. In the first case, where we are dealing with the pointer concept, the intellect functions on a subordinate level, as purely instrumental to a consciousness field which is non-conceptual. In the second case, the conceptual content is its own subject matter, and one sees development within that subject matter. In its higher reaches pure mathematics becomes progressively more and more pure in the sense of being freed from the contamination of a sensuous element, but also the thinking becomes more and more difficult as it becomes purely conceptual. In point of fact, our mental processes as we know them commonly, even in the field of empiric science, are a complex of the sensuous perceptual and the conceptual more or less interacting; and in point of ease of development, it is much easier to deal with this complex, interacting process than with the pure conceptual. At the highest level it takes extreme concentration, and I would suggest that at this level man is reaching out towards that which transcends the merely human.

It probably is not well known to the mathematical layman that since the development of the non-Euclidian geometries of Lobachevsky and Riemann, the whole idea of building a mathematical system upon self-evident truths called axioms has been abandoned and that in its place we simply introduce postulates as fundamental assumptions, and thus can build different systems of mathematics that vary quite widely at times from the systems with which we are familiar in the main line of mathematical development. In this way we open a door to a vast order of conceptual freedom in a development that's very much akin to the artistic development with sensuous subject matter. In fact the pure mathematician on this level has a distaste for application, and feels offended if his creation is so applied. Nonetheless, it has been found that these relatively free developments of conceptual imagination under rigid logically form almost invariable, sooner or later, do have an application; and an instance in point is that when it came to the development of his General Theory of Relativity, Einstein found that the Riemannian system of non-Euclidian geometry fit his needs better than the classical Greek form of geometry.² This may be a fact not too well known, but it does show that there is a conceptual interest that is pure, unrelated to the empiric factor, but which holds the interest of an important class of human beings who are in a way working at the forefront of the conceptual adventure.

Here, in this process, values are attained which are ends in themselves on the conceptual level that are not oriented to the sensuous empiric field. In other words, these are developments that are not merely instrumental to a sensuously experiential attainment, but to a conceptual attainment that is valued in and for itself. This exists. This is a fact. To be sure, those who move in this realm are relatively few in number, but it is a fact. I have already testified to the fact that I, myself, have experienced, or "imperienced," more correctly, numinous value from the pure conceptual in some of the higher ranges of the mathematical imperience.³ I never have attained such numinous value from the sensuous form of experience. This, of course, is testimony and can only be taken on the assumption that I am correctly reporting.

This question has persisted in my mind for time, "Why was Dr. Jung so hostile to the intellect that he identified it with the devil, the principle of darkness and evil?" I recalled that he made a certain confession in his autobiography called *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* that may give us a key to understanding this problem. As a student he seems to have been quite precocious in certain directions. On his own, while still a student in the gymnasium, he read standard philosophers such as Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and, particularly, Immanuel Kant. He even read, entirely on his own, the whole of the *Critique of Pure Reason* at a time far earlier in academic training than would normally be the case, and he got, apparently, a great deal from Kant's writing. Yet it is his own confession that he never could understand mathematics. I shall read the appurtenant

² See the audio recording, "Statement Regarding Transubstantiation," part 2, for further analysis of this subject.

³ For the definition of 'imperience', see the audio recordings, "General Discourse on the Subject of My Philosophy," part 10, and "On My Philosophy: Extemporaneous Statement." In speaking of introceptual knowledge, Wolff says, "The third function therefore gives you imperience, not experience. It is akin to sense perception in the sense of being immediate, but is not sensuous."

quotation from his autobiography. This will be found on p. 27 of *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, the first edition:

School came to bore me. It took up far too much time which I would rather have spent drawing battles and playing with fire. Divinity classes were unspeakably dull, and I felt a downright fear of the mathematics class. The teacher pretended that algebra was a perfectly natural affair, to be taken for granted, whereas I didn't even know what numbers really were. They were not flowers, not animals, not fossils; they were nothing that could be imagined, mere quantities that resulted from counting. To my confusion these quantities were now represented by letters, which signified sounds, so that it became possible to hear them, so to speak. Oddly enough, my classmates could handle these things and found them self-evident. No one could tell me what numbers were, and I was unable even to formulate the question. To my horror I found that no one understood my difficulty. The teacher, I must admit, went to great lengths to explain to me the purpose of this curious operation of translating understandable quantities into sounds. I finally grasped that what was aimed at was a kind of system of abbreviation, with the help of which many quantities could be put in a short formula. But this did not interest me in the least. I felt the whole business was entirely arbitrary. Why should numbers be expressed by sounds? One might just as well express a by apple tree, b by box, and x by a question mark. a , b , c , x , y , z were not concrete and did not explain to me anything about the essence of numbers, anymore than an apple tree did. But the thing that exasperated me most of all was the proposition: If $a = b$ and $b = c$, then $a = c$, even though by definition a meant something other than b , and, being different, could therefore not be equated with b , let alone with c . Whenever it was a question of an equivalence, then it was said that $a = a$, $b = b$, and so on. This I could accept, whereas $a = b$ seemed to me a downright lie or a fraud. I was equally outraged when the teacher stated in the teeth of his own definition of parallel lines that they met at infinity. This seemed to me no better than a stupid trick to catch the peasants with, and I could not and would not have anything to do with it. My intellectual morality fought against these whimsical inconsistencies, which have forever debarred me from understanding mathematics. Right into old age I have had the incorrigible feeling that if, like my schoolmates, I could have accepted without a struggle the proposition that $a = b$, or that sun = moon, dog = cat, then mathematics might have fooled me endlessly—just *how* much I only began to realize at the age of eighty-four. All my life it remained a puzzle to me why it was that I never managed to get my bearings in mathematics when there was no doubt whatever that I could calculate properly. Least of all did I understand my own *moral* doubts concerning mathematics.

Equations I could comprehend only by inserting specific numerical values in place of the letters and verifying the meaning of the operation by actual

calculation. As we went on in mathematics I was able to get along, more or less, by copying out algebraic formulas whose meaning I did not understand, and by memorizing where a particular combination of letters had stood on the blackboard. I could no longer make headway by substituting numbers, for from time to time the teacher would say, “Here we put the expression so-and-so,” and then he would scribble a few letters on the blackboard. I had no idea where he got them and why he did it—the only reason I could see was that it enabled him to bring the procedure to what he felt was a satisfactory conclusion. I was so intimidated by my incomprehension that I did not dare to ask any questions. Mathematics classes became sheer terror and torture to me.⁴

To one who has made his orientation to mathematics in the modern sense both without friction and easily, this statement suggests an incredible degree of stupidity. There seems to be a lack of the capacity for abstraction in the case of Dr. Jung that is essential for mathematical understanding. There is obviously an orientation to the concrete particular in the sensible order that stands in the way of the abstraction that is essential, and this seems to have been so persistent that never in his lifetime, according to his statement, was he ever able to come to an understanding of mathematics in the modern sense. Yet there is no doubt about the real ability of Dr. Jung in his chosen field. I think we may say without question, he had genius in that field. Maybe it is true that it is only genius who can manifest in his undeveloped side monumental stupidity. Do we have here, per chance, the reason why Dr. Jung identified the intellect with the devil?

I have read and studied perhaps a dozen of Dr. Jung’s published works, and I have been deeply impressed with his erudition and his competency in his field as a physician. Nonetheless, I find an element there that indicates that his conceptual patterns are only instrumental to a meaning that is non-conceptual. In other words, the conceptuality which is essential for the formulation in verbal form is instrumental to a meaning which is non-conceptual. This then indicates that his use of the concept is of that type which I have called the *pointer concept*. A critique of his work, therefore, could not be a critical evaluation in the logical sense of his formulation, but a critique of his adequacy in determining the processes that were non-conceptual to which his concepts refer. In other words, a critique would be akin to the critique in the aesthetic arts, as I have discussed them before. This is a clarifying thought. I am not objecting to development of this sort. It is proper, I think, for its subject matter. But this is not the use of the concept as we know it in mathematics where one enters into the meaningful content of a complex of conceptions to derive a conceptual consequence. This is the use of the concept in its form as a *container concept*, and this is something that one must bear in mind. Do not read Jung as though you were reading a mathematical text. Read him with an eye to a meaning which lies beyond the concept, or even below the concept, and judge it from that point of view.

The discussion of the relationship between the ‘concept’ and the ‘percept’ is traceable backward in the history of Western philosophy for at least 2,500 years. Most

⁴ Carl G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1961), 27-29.

notably, we have the record of Plato's discussion of this subject in which he differentiated between the divine knowledge of 'universals' and the purely secular or earthly knowledge of concrete 'particulars', which are percepts. He gave unquestioning superior evaluation of the conceptual entities, for in the last analysis every concept is a universal. Adumbrations of this differentiation may be identified in the emphases given by Heraclitus and Parmenides. Heraclitus asserted that *change* is the universal fact in life and nature—that even one could not step into the same stream twice because it is ever changing—while Parmenides emphasized that which is *permanent* and *unchanging*; two facts with which we have to deal, but here we have philosophers emphasizing the contrasting facts respectively. Now, it is the concept that gives you the sense of something persistent and unchanging, whereas the perceptual order is ever in a process of ever becoming other.

After Plato, during the days of the scholastics, there was manifest the two currents of emphases. There were the nominalists who maintained that the concept was only a name, but was not the conveyer of the essentially real, that rather, otherwise, we find that it's in the immediate experience that we have the real, and with the concepts only names; while, on the other hand, the Platonic scholastics maintained the reality of the concept.

We come beyond them to the day of the emergence of modern philosophy which took place in the work of the same man who was the initiator of modern mathematics, namely, Rene Descartes. He developed his philosophy in a pattern that essentially followed that of mathematics, and initiated what has since been known as the rationalistic school of philosophy. With them the conception of 'innate ideas', ideas that are essential conceptual in form, did exist in the human being even when he was born and that they simply emerged as he became more and more conscious. This school developed on the continent of Europe through Leibnitz, Spinoza, and Christian Wolff, but there was awakened another school on the British Isles that contrasted radically. It's easy to see that the rationalistic school was oriented to the conceptual order and very definitely influenced by mathematics. In fact, two of the rationalistic philosophers, Descartes and Leibnitz, were important contributors to mathematical disciplines, namely, analytic geometry and calculus handled in the analytic way, contrasting to the form given to it by Newton quite independently; and then we have Spinoza who in his *Ethics* develops his philosophy in the pattern that is characteristic of a classical book on geometry.

But this was balanced by a counter-school developed on the British Isles known as the school of Empiricism who affirmed the principle that all knowledge comes from experience and without experience we have no knowledge at all; thus, there are no innate ideas. This line of development started with John Locke, continued by Bishop Berkeley, and had its final statement by David Hume, who was a keen logician and showed that if all our knowledge comes from experience alone, then we could have no knowledge whatever of law. And, thus, he said that even though we saw the sun rise a million times, we would have no assurance that it would rise tomorrow because the mere fact of experiencing something many times does not prove that it will be continued as a form of experience; and the result was a state of real nescience.

This shocked to wakefulness what was to prove to be one of the greatest minds of this world during historic times, namely, the mind of Immanuel Kant, and the result was

the development of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Is the final word of our knowledge only nescience as to the existence of order and law in this universe? I shall not go into the development of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, as it is one of the most abstruse volumes in the whole of philosophy, but a suggestion of his orientation is given in the very first sentence of the book, and the sentence runs this way, “No doubt all our knowledge begins with experience, but it does not therefore follow that all our knowledge comes from experience.”⁵ The implication here is that on the occasion of experience another kind of knowledge is awakened into action, and this is the knowledge that is related to the principle of law and form in our cognitions. He points out in his “Introduction” that the critique of David Hume, by itself, would invalidate the whole of mathematics. Yet there is no doubt that mathematics works. Our constructions could not be made without that mathematical presence. We could not construct bridges; we could not construct buildings that would stand, or make machines, and so forth. So, we know that mathematics works even from the purely empirical side, and if it works there must be some basis whereby it is possible. But mathematics is the result of pure thought, mainly; therefore, there must be some kind of knowledge that comes from sources other than the sensuous empiric. The development of Kant is extensive and very erudite. There are two zones which he considers: the aesthetic and the zone of the categories of the understanding, which is the conceptual order. He ultimately arrives at this consequent, that our knowledge requires two components: the sensuous, or perceptual, and the conceptual, and the relationship which he ultimately gives as between these two is that concepts without percepts are empty. And on the other hand, percepts without concepts are blind.⁶ There thus is involved an interaction between these two in order to develop the principle of knowledge upon which we are not only practically dependent but also theoretically dependent.

Now, the question arose how is pure mathematics possible? Kant offered the suggestion, that we derived our knowledge of geometry, for instance, from the transcendental aesthetic principle of space, and our arithmetic from the transcendental aesthetic principle of time. Thus, here too there is a combination of the conceptual and the perceptual, for the aesthetic is the perceptual, in a transcendental form in order to achieve this kind of very abstract knowledge. However, the derivation of arithmetic from time was placed under very acute analysis by the late Bertrand Russell, who was the supreme authority upon the subject of the logic of mathematics, and he seems to have shown that this derivation is inadequate. Rather, Russell seems to show that arithmetic is derived from the categories of the understanding, or in other words from logic. And the point might well be made that if we consider the very abstract forms of geometry, such as that developed by Hilbert where we can abandon altogether our intuition of space, that this too is ultimately derived from the categories of the understanding rather than from the transcendental aesthetic component; and thus we would have a knowledge from the side of the understanding, or the conceptual side, that did not involve a combination with

⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1965), 41. The text actually reads, “But though all our knowledge begins with experience, it does not follow that it all arises out of experience.”

⁶ *Ibid.*, 93. The text actually reads: “Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind.”

the aesthetic component. And this tends to support my own thesis that the conceptual is not exclusively introceptual,⁷ but taps also an order of an original data.

We have considered so far two orders of cognition, namely, sense perception and conceptual form of cognition. In general, this has been the subject matter of philosophy in historic time both East and West. We have yet to consider a contribution by F. S. C. Northrop in his *The Meeting of East and West*, where these two elements are tied into the genius of the East and the West, and my own contribution based upon a breakthrough to a state of Realization or Enlightenment, leading to a formulation which required the introduction of a third form of cognition, which I called 'introception'. These features will be considered in the next and following tape.

⁷ Wolff may have meant to say, "... the conceptual is not exclusively instrumental ..."